

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims replaces all prior listing of claims in this application.

Claims 1-12 (canceled).

13. (currently amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, the method comprising:

depositing a dielectric film over an active region of a semiconductor substrate to form part of a gate of a transistor; and

subjecting the dielectric film to a densifying treatment to stabilize said film by heating the semiconductor substrate; and

subjecting the said stabilized dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam process in a rapid thermal process chamber to raise the oxygen content of said stabilized dielectric film provided by heating a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases ~~in a rapid thermal process chamber~~ at a temperature greater than about 450 °C, ~~wherein said dielectric film undergoes wet oxidation with only a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases that form steam, and~~ wherein the ratio of hydrogen to oxygen gases is in the range from 0.1 to about 0.8 and the pressure of said rapid thermal process chamber is held at about atmospheric pressure.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 13 wherein the wet oxidation process is performed at a temperature in the range of about 750 °C to about 950 °C and for a duration of about 20 seconds to about 60 seconds.

Claim 15 (canceled).

16. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein depositing a dielectric film includes depositing a material having a dielectric constant of at least about 25.

17. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein depositing a dielectric film includes depositing a material selected from the group consisting of tantalum oxide and silicon nitride.

Claims 18-41 (canceled).

42. (currently amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, the method comprising:

depositing a dielectric film over a semiconductor substrate to form one of a gate and a capacitor dielectric; and

subjecting the dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam process to raise the oxygen content of said dielectric film provided by heating a mixture of ~~only~~ hydrogen and oxygen gases in a rapid thermal process chamber at a temperature greater than about 450°C, wherein said mixture is a ratio from 0.1 to approximately 0.80 of hydrogen gas to oxygen gas ~~for a period of about 20 to about 60 seconds~~ and said hydrogen and oxygen gases are combined in said rapid thermal process chamber and said rapid thermal process chamber has a pressure of around 1 millitorr.

Claim 43 (canceled).